

R/KDA

98P-0509

From: Ruth Logerquist <rloger@lakefield.net> on 09/11/2000 03:22 AM GMT  
Please respond to Ruth Logerquist <rloger@lakefield.net>

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To: president@Whitehouse.GOV  
cc:  
Subject: Relationship between FDA and artificial sweetener industry keeps the herb STEVIA from consumer.

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[Connection Information]

CLIENT: 206.40.122.3 [206.40.122.3]  
BROWSER: Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 5.5; Windows 98;  
ezn/32/63/ie)  
URL: http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/Mail/html/Mail\_President.html

[Sender Information]

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[Message Information]

PURPOSE: \*\*Select One\*\*  
TOPIC: \*\*Select One\*\*  
AFFILIATION: Private Citizen  
SUBJECT: Relationship between FDA and artificial sweetener industry  
keeps the herb STEVIA from consumer.

[Message]

I am writing to express my outrage at the Food and Drug Administration's mishandling of the herb STEVIA in the United States. While other nations are able to use this wonderful herb as a sugar substitute, Americans are limited to using it as a "dietary supplement". Why is this? STEVIA is approved for use as a food and food ingredient in countries around the world--because it is all-natural, non-toxic, non-caloric, helpful to the environment, a valuable cash crop and safe for diabetics, hence completely safe for human use--but FDA restricts its use by Americans. Effectively banned within the United States, STEVIA plants are not even grown by American farmers.

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With the passage of the 1994 Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA), Congress rightly gave the power back to the people concerning whether or not to improve their health with the use of natural products previously kept out of reach. DSHEA also permitted Americans to use STEVIA but only as a dietary supplement. Despite this legal protection, the FDA has done everything within it's power to try to prevent the importation and distribution of STEVIA in the United States. Petitions to have STEVIA receive GRAS (Generally Accepted as Safe) status were denied by the FDA. FDA employs delay tactics, such as requesting unreasonable amounts of statistical data about this plant's agricultural and commercial history prior to 1958.

In 1997, the CBS news magazine 60 Minutes aired a report revealing a conflict of interest between FDA and one manufacturer of artificial sweeteners. This manufacturer had "influenced" the director of the FDA to get the approval of aspartame as a food additive during the 1980s when there were many questionable reports on its safety. Today the FDA receives more complaints about aspartame than about any other product. It is believed that the cozy relationship between FDA and the artificial sweetener industry is why STEVIA has largely been kept out of reach of the American consumer.

Is STEVIA safe? Absolutely. Research proves this--research the FDA ignores. Moreover, STEVIA has been used extensively around the world as an ingredient in foods WITHOUT A SINGLE CASE OF UNDESIRABLE EFFECTS. This fact alone should qualify as proof that the product is safe for use as an all-natural sweetener..

Do the American people want STEVIA? Count on it. Americans are more and more averse to the use of artificial substances in their diets. The herb STEVIA is especially beneficial for people who suffer from diabetes, hypoglycemia, candida and other ailments where regular use of sugar and artificial sweeteners is ill-advised.

As my elected representative, you ought to review the entire controversy surrounding the herb STEVIA. FDA's unconscionable withholding of this natural substance from the American people must be answered, once and for all.

Make good on DSHEA. Give STEVIA full legal status.

Yours truly,

Ruth Logerquist